

What is claimed is:

1. A toothbrush for detecting the presence of plaque on the user's teeth, comprising a handle, a cleaning head attached to said handle, said cleaning head having an
5 outer surface, cleaning elements on said cleaning head extending outwardly from said outer surface, said cleaning elements being located in a cleaning field, said toothbrush having an ultraviolet light, and said ultraviolet light having an emitter in said cleaning
10 field to radiate ultraviolet light toward the user's teeth for activating a dye on any plaque on the user's teeth to create a visual fluorescent effect that would indicate the presence of said plaque.
2. The toothbrush of claim 1 wherein said handle is hollow,
15 said ultraviolet light having a light source in said handle, and light transmission structure transmitting the ultraviolet light to said emitter.
3. The toothbrush of claim 2 wherein said light source is a miniature UV bulb.
- 20 4. The toothbrush of claim 2 wherein said light source is at least one UV emitting LED.
5. The toothbrush of claim 4 wherein said at least one LED is surface mounted to said toothbrush.
6. The toothbrush of claim 5 wherein said at least one LED
25 has a wavelength of 350-410 nm.
7. The toothbrush of claim 2 wherein said toothbrush is a manual toothbrush.

8. The toothbrush of claim 7 wherein said light source is selectively actuated by a switch on said handle.
9. The toothbrush of claim 2 wherein said toothbrush is a powered toothbrush having a movable cleaning element carrying section in said cleaning head.
10. The toothbrush of claim 9 wherein said light source is selectively actuated by a switch on said handle.
11. The toothbrush of claim 10 wherein said switch also actuates said movable section.
12. The toothbrush of claim 9 wherein said cleaning head also includes a non-movable fixed section having cleaning elements, and said emitter is located in said fixed section.
13. The toothbrush of claim 1 wherein said emitter emits UV light from plural locations in said cleaning field.
14. The toothbrush of claim 1 wherein at least some of said cleaning elements are bristles
15. A method for detecting the presence of plaque on a user's teeth comprising incorporating in a carrier a dye which has the characteristic of attaching to plaque and which has the characteristic of being fluorescent in the presence of UV light, applying the carrier to the user's teeth, attaching the dye to any plaque on the user's teeth, radiating UV light from a UV light source toward the user's teeth, and creating a visual fluorescent effect where plaque is present on the user's teeth.

16. The method of claim 15 including removing excess dye and carrier from the user's teeth before radiating the UV light toward the user's teeth.
- 5 17. The method of claim 16 wherein the excess dye and carrier are removed by a rinse and spitting action.
18. The method of claim 15 wherein the carrier is selected from the group consisting of toothpaste, oral rinse, oral mouthwash, gum, lozenge and a polymer strip.
- 10 19. The method of claim 15 wherein the carrier is in liquid form and is gargled for applying the carrier to the user's teeth.
20. The method of claim 15 wherein the UV light source is in a toothbrush.
- 15 21. The method of claim 20 wherein the carrier is toothpaste applied to the toothbrush.
22. The method of claim 20 wherein the UV light source is selectively activated by a switch.
23. The method of claim 20 wherein the toothbrush is a manual toothbrush.
- 20 24. The method of claim 20 wherein the toothbrush is a powered toothbrush.